

Fashionable Flooring

The Floors Of Tomorrow Will Reflect What's On The Runway Today

(NAPSA)—When you walk into a room, your eyes do not move from top to bottom—quite the opposite. Your gaze starts at the floor and moves up. Just as the clothes you wear make a fashion statement, your floors set the tone, add the drama and create the mood in your home.

According to the World Floor Covering Association (WFCA), the latest products and trends in flooring offer high-tech innovations, low-maintenance attributes and eco-friendly features. Below, you'll find a closer look at some of the latest styles to consider when it's time to dress your floors:

Weathered and Worn

Aged and vintage looks have maintained their firm grip when it comes to floor trends. Think genuine hardwood with worn, heavily textured wood grain and the weathered imperfections that can only be achieved with years of use. For many, price has kept these highly sought floors out of reach—until now.

Manufacturers today are building the patina of reclaimed wood into brand-new flooring products. Solid and engineered hardwood formats can have all the distressed and eroded character of products much older so each board has a unique look.

The same vintage looks are available in laminate and luxury vinyl tile (LVT). The surfaces are created using high-resolution digital imaging and state-of-the-art embossing techniques. Designed to minimize repeats, they're almost impossible to tell from the real thing—and significantly less expensive!

Porcelain tiles feature salvaged looks such as oxidized metal and weathered wood. Tiles with dry, earthen textures and parched surface finishes in light to mid sun-baked shades and hazy grays are also popular.

The beauty of the weathered



When it comes to decor, the largest palette is right beneath your feet. Now, bold stripes, oversized florals and marine blues are hitting the floor in style.

look is that it pairs well with all interiors, does a wonderful job of hiding blemishes, and works well with both soft and bold color accents.

Depth and Dimension

The right flooring can make large spaces cozy and small spaces grand with long, wide planks and tiles.

Longer wood planks and large-format porcelain tiles mean fewer seams and grout lines, lengthening smaller spaces such as hallways and bathrooms as the eye is not distracted by breaks in the flooring. Fewer seams and less grout means easier cleaning, too.

Texture and Pattern

The latest looks in LVT involve nature-inspired low-luster and matte finishes.

Also in step with toned-down looks are oil-finish hardwood floors, which are steadily gaining ground among designers and consumers. Natural oils penetrate the wood grain for a satinlike, zero-gloss appearance. In soft-surface flooring, highly affordable synthetics offer a more delustered look that mimics more expensive natural materials including wool, silk and cotton. The matte surface also works to mask vacuum marks and footprints.

Concrete flooring offers soft and warm looks in muted grays, taupe and beige. Its versatility makes it

complementary and adaptable to all kinds of interior settings.

Another trend is to mix contrasting materials such as wood and tile. Though not possible with the “real thing” due to wood’s tendency to expand and contract, pairing wood and stone looks in porcelain creates a stunning effect.

Tiles made to look like bricks are also popular. The laid-back “loft look” in porcelain is much easier to maintain than the real thing. The most basic of shapes, the stripe, is also appearing in all categories of flooring, especially soft surface. It appears frequently in the form of striated rock looks in weaves; in porcelain and glass, as mini finger tiles; and in vinyl, in looks that mimic linen, sedimentary rock and parquet.

Carpet continues to get softer and more plush as technology advances. The latest look features layered color, soft texture and lots of dimension. Using another technique that combines both loops and sheared fibers, carpets are imbued with 3-D effects featuring multiple heights and colors ranging from subtle to bold.

Growing in popularity are carpets and rugs in florals and foliage looks in shades of indigo, petrol, purple and green. Other new carpets show sculpted surfaces that look like sand dunes, ocean waves and tree bark.

Modern Conveniences

Beauty is important in floor coverings, but function is also key. Over 70 percent of the population owns a pet, so one manufacturer offers a 100 percent “All Pet Warranty” on carpets with built-in stain repellent and total moisture absorption. New technology forces all the water from the stain to evaporate so the trace material left over can simply be wiped away.

Learn More

Further information and practical tips are on the WFCA website, www.WFCA.org, and blog, FloorTalk.wfca.org.